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Report of the Secretary-General on Chad and the Central African Republic pursuant to paragraphs 9 (d) and 13 of Security Council resolution 1706 (2006)

I. Introduction

1. In my report on Darfur of 28 July 2006 (S/2006/591), I emphasized the threat to regional peace and security posed by the situation in Darfur, in particular with respect to Chad and the Central African Republic. On 31 August 2006, the Security Council adopted resolution 1706 (2006), in which it decided, in paragraph 9 (d), that the mandate of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) in Darfur shall include, inter alia:

> To assist in addressing regional security issues in close liaison with international efforts to improve the security situation in the neighbouring regions along the borders between the Sudan and Chad and between the Sudan and the Central African Republic, including through the establishment of a multidimensional presence consisting of political, humanitarian, military and civilian police liaison officers in key locations in Chad, including in the internally displaced persons and refugee camps, and if necessary, in the Central African Republic, and to contribute to the implementation of the Agreement between the Sudan and Chad signed on 26 July 2006.

2. Furthermore, in paragraph 13 of the same resolution, the Council also requested me to report "on the protection of civilians in refugee and internally displaced persons camps in Chad and on how to improve the security situation on the Chadian side of the border with [the] Sudan".

3. Subsequently, the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council issued a communiqué on 20 September 2006, in which it encouraged "any steps that could be taken, including by the United Nations, to enhance security along the borders between Sudan and Chad and between [the] Sudan and the Central African Republic, as well as ensure the protection and security of refugees in Chad".

4. In order to formulate recommendations pursuant to paragraphs 9 (d) and 13 of resolution 1706 (2006), I dispatched a multidisciplinary technical assessment mission to Chad and the Central African Republic, led by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and comprising representatives of the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Public Information, the Department of Safety and Security, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of

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the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), during the period from 21 November to 3 December. The Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations joined the mission for high-level consultations from 29 November to 3 December. The mission met with President Déby of Chad and President Bozizé of the Central African Republic; other senior Government officials, both civilian and military; political parties, representing both the majority and opposition movements; civil society; and humanitarian and human rights representatives. The mission also met with United Nations partners and members of the diplomatic community in both countries. In the Central African Republic, the team furthermore met with the commander of the Multinational Force of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (FOMUC), as well as with a joint European Union-AU mission, which was in the country to conduct a midterm review of FOMUC.

5. Due to the prevailing security situation, the technical assessment mission was not able to visit the north-eastern Central African Republic and eastern Chad, the regions bordering Darfur. The duration of the team's visit to Chad was also curtailed, as it was held up in Bangui for two days due to security concerns following a major rebel attack on Abéché and other areas in eastern Chad at the end of November. Only a part of the team subsequently travelled to N'Djamena, as it became clear that a field visit to eastern Chad would not be possible in view of the ongoing hostilities.

6. Accordingly, the present report provides an overview of the political, security, humanitarian and human rights situation in both countries and, in particular, of the protection of civilians in refugee and internally displaced persons locations in Chad. It also outlines some preliminary options regarding the possible mandate, structure and concept of operations of a multidimensional United Nations presence in both countries.

II. Political and security situation

A. Chad

7. Since independence in 1960, Chad has faced recurrent violent conflict and political instability, which have hindered the emergence of strong State institutions and democratic governance in the country. Moreover, successive military coups have contributed to a culture of violence still prevailing in the country. The lack of political stability and insecurity have also seriously hampered economic development, despite prospects of high revenues from the new oil industry.

8. After taking power from Hissène Habré in December 1990, President Idriss Déby Itno won three successive presidential elections in 1996, 2001 and 2006. During that period, Chad was not able, despite some progress, to achieve fully inclusive governance.

9. A constitutional amendment adopted in June 2005 allowed President Déby to run for a third term in the elections conducted in May 2006. The defection of high-ranking military officers in 2005 and 2006 and their decision to join various Chadian rebel groups further undermined the political climate and posed a serious threat to the Government. Those rebel groups have exploited the volatile situation in

the border areas to launch what appear to be increasingly coordinated attacks against the national army of Chad.

10. The rebel groups reportedly comprise significant numbers of former officers of the national army as well as non-Chadians, including Sudanese nationals. In addition, some Sudanese armed elements, including from the Justice and Equality Movement and the National Redemption Front, also appear to be present in the north-eastern area of Chad, around Bahai. There are also allegations that Sudanese rebel groups are recruiting from refugee camps in Chad.

11. In view of the ever more volatile situation in the border region, and pursuant to the Tripoli Agreement of 8 February 2006 and the N'Djamena Agreement of 26 July 2006, Chad and the Sudan agreed to establish a joint mechanism to monitor the situation along the common border through the deployment of mixed military forces in several areas along the border. However, the Agreements have not been implemented and relations between the two countries have deteriorated considerably. Both parties have accused each other of supporting rebel groups and/or mercenaries seeking to destabilize the respective Governments. At the same time, there is only very limited dialogue between the Government of Chad and the political opposition or the rebel groups.

12. Rebel and criminal activities, as well as inter-ethnic clashes, have increased in eastern Chad during the recent months. These activities have included attacks by Janjaweed militia based in the southern Sudan, which have launched raids into Chad, looting and pillaging. On 13 November, Chad declared a state of emergency in the eastern part of the country, in particular in Ouaddaï, Wadi Fira and Salamat prefectures. The emergency was also extended, preventively, to Hadjer Lamis, Borkou-Ennedi-Tibesti and Moyen Chari prefectures and to N'Djamena. Following the recent brief occupation of Abéché in eastern Chad by rebels on 25 November, the upsurge of rebel activities around Biltine, 60 km to the north-east of Abéché, and rebel threats to attack N'Djamena, the Government, on 28 November, declared that it was in "a state of war" with the Sudan, and accused both the Sudan and elements in Saudi Arabia of providing support to the rebels.

13. The national army of Chad is currently composed of some 25,000 troops of whom 15,000 are reportedly deployed in eastern Chad. Under the Chadian Constitution, the national police and national gendarmerie share law enforcement responsibilities in the country. Together, they have an estimated 10,000 personnel. The national police are present primarily in urban areas, whereas the gendarmerie is deployed in the countryside. However, the current police presence in the eastern regions reportedly consists only of about 200 police officers divided between the commissariats of Abéché and Biltine. The level of training and basic logistic support of these units is insufficient, and their strength is grossly inadequate to respond to the needs of a population estimated at 1.1 million in the three eastern provinces.

14. The presence of French military forces in Chad appears to have a significant stabilizing influence, although they have refrained from intervening in the recent hostilities between rebel groups and the Government. Altogether, over 1,000 French troops, supported by significant air assets, are based in Chad.

15. In a note verbale dated 7 November 2006, the Government of Chad expressed its preliminary views on a possible United Nations role in eastern Chad pursuant to Security Council resolution 1706 (2006). The note called for the limited deployment

of "an international civilian force" to ensure security in the refugee camps established in the east of the country and to "guarantee their neutrality". At the same time, it proposed that the force be made up of gendarmes provided by African countries and paid for by Europe or the United Nations. The note further indicated that the Government did not want Chad to be used as "a rear base for an intervention in Darfur under United Nations auspices without the prior consent of [the] Sudan". However, in a follow-up note verbale dated 15 November 2006, the Government of Chad alleged that genocide was being committed at the Chadian-Sudanese border and accused the Sudan of instigating a "scorched-earth" policy in Darfur and eastern Chad. The note verbale called on the international community to deploy a "United Nations force" along the border with the Sudan, and to "effectively implement Security Council resolution 1706 (2006)".

16. During a meeting with the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations on 2 December, President Déby confirmed that his Government welcomed, in principle, the deployment of a United Nations presence in eastern Chad, pursuant to paragraph 9 (d) of Security Council resolution 1706 (2006). However, President Déby noted that the modalities of such a deployment would have to be further discussed at the technical level. At the same time, he stressed his decision to have several refugee camps relocated away from the border for security reasons. Subsequently, in a letter addressed to the President of the Security Council dated 9 December, President Déby confirmed that he would agree to the deployment of "an international presence at the border with [the] Sudan" to strengthen security in the area and ensure protection of refugees and internally displaced persons.

B. Central African Republic

17. The history of the Central African Republic, a large and sparsely populated country, has been marked by deep-rooted poverty, ethnic tension, pervasive political instability and armed conflict, including over the last 10 years. The country has also been affected by regional instability and internal conflict in neighbouring countries, which have resulted in movements of refugees, arms and rebel groups across its porous borders.

18. Following a series of internal conflicts and mutinies in 1996 and 1997, subregional mediation efforts led to the establishment of the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements in February 1997. It was replaced in April 1998 by a United Nations peacekeeping operation, the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA). Following the successful holding of elections in September 1999, MINURCA was withdrawn and replaced by the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA). The Office continues to support efforts to consolidate peace and achieve national reconciliation.

19. In August 2002, the security situation in the Central African Republic deteriorated markedly, in particular in the northern part of the country. In October 2002, CEMAC established FOMUC in the Central African Republic. Since then, the Force, which consists of 380 troops from Chad, Gabon and the Congo, has played a useful role. The current mandate of the subregional force, which expires on 30 June 2007, is to contribute to the stability of the Central African Republic and the restructuring of the Central African Armed Forces (FACA).

20. A national dialogue launched in 2002 was interrupted when General Francois Bozizé replaced President Ange-Félix Patassé in the wake of a coup d'état in March 2003. Subsequently, the transitional Government of President Bozizé organized a national dialogue in September 2003 with the participation of former Presidents of the Central African Republic, with the exception of President Patassé.

21. While General Bozizé subsequently won presidential and legislative elections in May 2005, the fragile stability in the country has been further exacerbated by the insecurity caused by criminal gangs and the emergence of an armed rebellion in both the north-west and the north-east of the country. The rebel groups consist of supporters of former President Patassé and of elements formerly associated with President Bozizé, who have since then turned against him. Attacks against FACA have occurred on a regular basis and the Central African Republic authorities are having difficulty maintaining law and order in several parts of the country.

22. One of the Central African Republic rebel groups claimed responsibility for attacking and occupying the town of Birao in the north-eastern prefecture of Vakaga on 30 October 2006. During the months of November and December, they also occupied the towns of Ouanda Djallé and Sam Ouadja in the same prefecture. The Central African Republic authorities have accused the Sudan of providing support to the group. The Central African Republic authorities have regained control of those areas, with support from FOMUC and France.

23. The attack and occupation of Birao occurred shortly after violent confrontations in Chad between the national army of Chad and a Chadian rebel group. The timing of these two events has led to speculation that Chadian rebel elements may have forged ties with certain Central African Republic rebel groups, using the north-eastern Central African Republic as a rear base and alternate route to launch attacks into Chad. That perception is reinforced by reports indicating that approximately 10 days after the attack on N'Djamena in April 2006, an aircraft landed in the north-eastern Central African Republic on at least two occasions and offloaded troops and military equipment.

24. Currently, FACA does not have the capacity to provide a secure environment throughout the country and is highly dependent on the support provided by FOMUC and France. It is composed of some 4,000 troops, of whom only 1,200 are assessed to be operational. Those troops are considered to have some potential, but they lack leadership, equipment, training and regular sustenance, in particular salaries and logistical support. There is evidence that during military operations, FACA troops have committed human rights abuses against civilians whom they believe to be supporting the rebels.

25. At present, both the CAR gendarmerie and police have abandoned the three prefectures in the north-east (Bamingui-Bangoran, Haute-Kotto and Vakaga). The total strength of the national police and gendarmerie is 3,145, but as currently configured, they cannot effectively address the current crisis in the north-east. Both the military and the police are in need of urgent reform to enable them to provide effective security throughout the country, while abiding by basic human rights standards.

26. In a note verbale addressed to BONUCA dated 1 November 2006, the Minister for Foreign Affairs appealed for the immediate and effective implementation of the measures outlined in paragraph 9 (d) of Security Council resolution 1706 (2006).

During his meeting with the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations on 30 November, President Bozizé welcomed the possible establishment of a United Nations peacekeeping presence in the north-east and stressed the need for its deployment as soon as possible, while asserting that the rebels in the north-east were supported by the Sudan.

III. Humanitarian situation

A. Chad

27. Currently, Chad is experiencing a multifaceted humanitarian crisis linked to the conflict in Darfur and the instability in the northern Central African Republic. As at 30 November 2006, it was hosting approximately 232,000 refugees from Darfur, and an additional 48,000 refugees from the Central African Republic. Altogether, some 92,000 Chadians have been displaced as a consequence of the recent upsurge in fighting, out of a total population of about 1.1 million in the eastern part of the country.

28. Despite the heavy burden that the Sudanese refugees represent for the country, the Government of Chad has welcomed them, in accordance with international standards and obligations. However, in order to cope with the situation, the Government has repeatedly appealed to the international community for assistance.

29. Out of the 232,000 Sudanese refugees, more than 220,000 receive assistance in 12 refugee camps. However, new refugees from Darfur continue to arrive, albeit at a lower rate. So far they have been accommodated in the existing camps.

30. Those refugee camps are located in the border region adjacent to Darfur and, with the exception of two camps, they are all located more than 50 km away from the border. In November 2006, the Government of Chad decided that the camps should be relocated further inside the country, some 500 km from the border, and appealed for international assistance to do so. According to the Government, the relocation of the camps is necessary not only to ensure the security of the refugees, but to put to rest the accusations by the Sudanese Government that N'Djamena encourages Sudanese rebels to use the refugee camps as a rear base. During the technical assessment mission, President Déby and other senior Government officials repeatedly insisted on the need to relocate the camps. The Government of Chad and UNHCR have established a technical working group to identify alternative sites that conform to minimum criteria including security, water, ethnic compatibility, medium-term viability and opportunities for self-sufficiency. In addition, the relocation of the refugees is subject to security conditions.

31. For the most part, internally displaced persons in eastern Chad are not in camps. Between 4 and 16 November, Janjaweed militia reportedly attacked and burned some 40 villages in the areas south of Goz Beïda and Koukou Angarana, resulting in the death of 260 to 500 civilians. As a result, some internally displaced persons were dispersed and are now living near refugee camps close to villages and towns, while others are scattered in locations which render the provision of assistance to them more difficult.

32. Ethnic and linguistic affinities among the populations in the region have so far ensured that tensions between internally displaced persons, Sudanese refugees and

the local communities have remained low. However, increased pressure on land and other scarce resources and recent hostilities in the region are undermining peaceful coexistence among the different groups. Humanitarian agencies are increasingly providing host communities with assistance in order to alleviate their burden, but also to reduce tensions. Clearly, however, that assistance is inadequate and greater efforts to provide relief assistance and to implement recovery programmes are needed.

33. A total of 10 United Nations agencies and 39 international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and members of the Red Cross movement are providing food, water, sanitation, health care, shelter, nutritional support, education, protection, psychosocial activities and other assistance to conflict-affected refugees, internally displaced persons and host populations. In addition to the deteriorating security conditions, the implementation of humanitarian operations in eastern Chad faces extreme challenges. The terrain is harsh, vast and has minimal infrastructure, and during the rainy season much of the area is virtually impassable.

34. Hostilities and the ensuing criminality have forced humanitarian agencies to repeatedly evacuate staff from eastern Chad. The recent fighting has required a shift to security phase IV and, as a result, the numbers of humanitarian and NGO staff serving in eastern Chad are being reduced and relocated. Such constant interruptions disrupt the provision of vital assistance.

35. Due to the complex and fluid security situation, refugees, displaced persons and host communities face a wide range of threats, which are compounded by the absence of the most basic law and order institutions. Among the most serious threats are the use of refugee camps for military purposes and local populations by the various rebel groups; forced recruitment, including of children; criminal activities; inter-ethnic strife; and violent competition for scarce natural resources. There is evidence of sexual and gender-based violence, but cultural norms prevent survivors from seeking treatment or reporting incidents. Overall, the growing insecurity is the single greatest impediment to the protection of the civilian population.

36. In response to the increasing security threats to the refugee camps and the difficulties encountered by the absence of capacity of the Government of Chad to ensure the civilian and humanitarian character of the camps, in March 2006 UNHCR negotiated a memorandum of understanding with the Ministries of Defence and Territorial Administration. The memorandum of understanding provides for the deployment of 235 gendarmes in the 12 refugee camps. Following the deterioration of the security situation, an additional protocol was negotiated and signed in September 2006. Under the protocol, an additional 75 gendarmes are to be deployed, bringing the total number to 315. The role of the gendarmes was also extended to include a presence in and around field offices, so as to improve the security of humanitarian staff. UNHCR provides them with the entire support package, including a stipend of 80,000 CFA (US$ 160) per gendarme, per month.

37. To date, implementation of the security package through the national gendarmes has had mixed results. Although they have diligently fulfilled many tasks and many did not flee the towns attacked by rebels, the gendarmes do not have the necessary equipment, training and experience to dissuade or prevent criminal activities, the recruitment of child soldiers, sexual and gender-based violence and the presence of armed combatants among the camp population. So far, only 220

gendarmes have been deployed and some have been drafted into the armed forces to fight the rebels.

38. A major concern is that no similar arrangement is in place covering the locations of internally displaced persons and the host communities. At present, apart from the border areas in which the Chadian army operates, a security vacuum exists, which is being exploited by various groups and criminal elements. Despite their innovative nature, the current arrangements fall significantly short of what is required to ensure the protection of the civilian population.

B. Central African Republic

39. The humanitarian situation in the Central African Republic is also a cause for serious concern. It is predominantly the result of internal events and deep-rooted poverty, but instability in neighbouring countries, particularly Chad and the Sudan, has also had an impact. Outside Bangui and major regional towns, basic services, such as education, water and sanitation and health care, are nearly non-existent. Basic infrastructure is lacking. Tensions have been increasing since early in 2006, and the humanitarian community considers that the situation in the Central African Republic is deteriorating rapidly. It is estimated that more than 1 million people out of a total population of about 3.8 million are affected. As at September 2006, the Central African Republic hosted nearly 20,000 refugees, including 14,000 Sudanese, 3,200 from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and 1,500 Chadians. The majority of Sudanese refugees are expected to be repatriated to the southern Sudan in 2007.

40. The north-west of the country, especially the prefectures of Ouham and Ouham-Pendé, is currently the epicentre of the humanitarian crisis, with at least 70,000 internally displaced persons. Tens of thousands of civilians are currently living in the bush with minimal shelter, health care, safe drinking water and sanitation. Their survival depends in part on the few humanitarian agencies operational in the area. Protection of the civilian population and the provision of life-saving assistance are the most urgent humanitarian challenges.

41. Sparsely populated Vakaga prefecture in the north-east has 52,000 inhabitants (2003 census), or a population density of only 1.1 inhabitants per km^2. Given the lack of access to and the dearth of information about the situation in the north-east, an accurate understanding of the humanitarian situation is not possible at present. The assumption is that the humanitarian situation in Vakaga is comparable to that in the rest of the country. Reportedly, a large number of civilians have been displaced by the recent fighting in and around Birao. At present, no United Nations agency or international NGO has a presence in the region. International NGOs have requested Government permission to assess the area. The Government, however, claims that the area is too insecure for a humanitarian presence.

IV. Human rights situation

A. Chad

42. Chad faces major challenges on the human rights front. Existing State structures for the protection and promotion of human rights appear unable or unwilling to tackle the prevailing culture of impunity that seems anchored to ethnic allegiances. The executive is commonly perceived to interfere in the work of the judiciary.

43. The international human rights treaties that Chad has ratified have yet to be incorporated in its domestic legislation. In peripheral regions, including those bordering Darfur, the traditional dispute resolution mechanism, known as *diya*, supersedes Chadian law. In most towns of the eastern regions, the judicial system has reportedly ceased to function. The ensuing impunity compounds inter-ethnic tensions.

44. Reported violations of human rights in Chad include extrajudicial killings, ill-treatment and torture, forcible recruitment, including of children, sexual violence and violations of political rights.

45. The general human rights situation is further aggravated by the conflict in the areas bordering Darfur. Findings by international human rights NGOs in eastern Chad speak of several hundred people killed in the past three months as a result of communal violence. Small arms are readily available. New armed groups proliferate at an alarming rate. Men, women and children, refugees and internally displaced, appear to be caught in a spiral of violence that not only deprives them of their means of livelihood, but also continuously undermines their physical integrity.

46. According to reports, the civilian population and Sudanese refugees in the eastern regions receive little or no protection from State institutions. The low literacy rate, including among civilian authorities, the absence of an active civil society and, increasingly, the erosion of traditional chiefs' authority represent serious long-term challenges.

B. Central African Republic

47. The human rights situation in the Central African Republic is also a serious concern. Impunity appears to be a major issue. Several documented cases of abuses and crimes committed by uniformed personnel have either gone totally unpunished or simply resulted in perfunctory disciplinary measures. The culture of impunity also takes the form of threats which, at times, amount to violent and even lethal acts against magistrates, lawyers, human rights defenders and independent journalists. Human rights abuses are also reportedly committed by the police and, to a lesser extent, the gendarmerie.

48. The ongoing conflict in the north of the Central African Republic results in gross violations of human rights perpetrated against the local population. The Central African Republic armed forces, in particular the Presidential Guard, are widely held responsible for reprisals, including burning villages, against the local population whom they accuse of supporting the rebels. The mission also received allegations of abuses committed by rebels.

49. Sexual violence against women, but also men, seems to be a lasting legacy of the 2002 and 2003 rebellions, during which it was committed on a large scale by all parties, to an extent that has justified the submission of a case to the International Criminal Court. There are alarming reports of witnesses for the Court being harassed by perpetrators who now wear State uniforms. One reliable source reported tens of cases of sexual violence perpetrated in 2006.

50. Other recent violations reportedly include the consistent use of ill treatment and torture of detainees, ongoing recruitment of child soldiers for deployment in the north, including the north-east of the Central African Republic, as well as the cultural practice of enslaving Pygmies.

51. Outside Bangui, there seems to be no functioning legal system in the Central African Republic, which can be seen as both the cause and the effect of the prevailing impunity. There is also a lack of capacity for the independent collection and analysis of human rights-related information, especially in conflict-affected areas such as the north-east.

V. Preliminary options for a United Nations multidimensional presence in Chad and the Central African Republic

A. Key findings

52. Since the technical assessment mission was not able to visit eastern Chad or the north-eastern Central African Republic due to the ongoing hostilities in both areas, it was not possible to develop fully fledged recommendations regarding a possible United Nations multidimensional presence in those areas. The following should therefore be treated as preliminary findings, which will need to be confirmed and adjusted by further assessments.

53. The technical mission confirmed that the conflicts in Darfur, Chad and the Central African Republic are increasingly interlinked, posing considerable threats to subregional security. The Darfur conflict has already spilled over into Chad with serious consequences for the country and beyond, while in the Central African Republic, the Government asserts that the Sudan is backing the rebels in the north-east. At the same time, it is clear that the north-east of the Central African Republic has been used by Chadian rebel groups as a route to bypass the Darfur-Chad border, thereby destabilizing Vakaga prefecture. The porosity of the borders is attested to by the numerous reports of infiltrations, incursions and cross-border activities by tribal and Janjaweed militias, as well as the regular forces and rebels of each of the three countries, except FACA.

54. The hostilities in Darfur and eastern Chad have already led to a regional humanitarian crisis, involving a total of over 2.3 million refugees and internally displaced persons on both sides of the border. While conditions in the north-eastern Central African Republic could not be assessed, it is obvious that the recent hostilities have led to a further deterioration in the humanitarian situation there. If the current pattern of hostilities continues in the border areas, it may lead to additional displacement of populations, which in turn will lead to greater destabilization of the whole subregion.

55. In the Central African Republic, the subregional force, FOMUC, has played a useful role with French assistance, but neither its mandate nor the capacity of the subregional operation are adequate to stabilize the situation.

56. As at the time of writing of the present report, there is no significant political or reconciliation process to resolve the conflicts in either Chad or the Central African Republic. So far, the two Governments have avoided entering into discussions with rebel groups, arguing they should first lay down their arms and back up the reconciliation process. With ongoing hostilities, the prospects of establishing durable peace and security are bleak. Moreover, with the prevailing trends, the armed confrontation may continue and the humanitarian crisis may intensify.

57. While the members of the technical assessment mission, in both Chad and the Central African Republic, discussed with senior Government officials the deployment of a United Nations multidimensional presence, it was not able to ascertain the views of the armed opposition groups. In their contacts with the team, opposition parties in both countries, however, indicated that armed opposition groups would regard a United Nations operation as partial and supportive of the two Governments. In the absence of a credible and inclusive political process, a United Nations multidimensional presence would therefore face considerable security risks.

58. Finally, the team also found that the deployment and subsequent sustainment of any United Nations presence in Chad and the Central African Republic would pose enormous logistical challenges. The area of operations is characterized by difficult terrain, extreme weather conditions, very poor infrastructure, an absence of major airfields and very long distances from the seaports.

B. Mandate of a United Nations multidimensional presence

59. In line with paragraph 9 (d) of Security Council resolution 1706 (2006), a possible United Nations multidimensional presence should seek to improve the security situation in the areas along the borders between the Sudan, Chad and the Central African Republic. The mandate would depend on the size and scope of the presence authorized. The preliminary recommendations of the mission are that the mandate should include the following elements: facilitation of political process/dialogue in the areas of deployment; protection of civilians within available capabilities; protection of United Nations personnel and their assets; monitoring and investigating the human rights situation; and strengthening of the local judicial, police and correctional system. In addition to the activities listed above, the mission could also include disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, gender, conduct and HIV/AIDS components, as well as mine action efforts, as appropriate.

C. Overall structure of a United Nations multidimensional presence

60. Given developments on the ground and the overall political and security assessment, it would seem necessary to consider establishing a separate United Nations presence for Chad and the Central African Republic, which would liaise and coordinate closely with the African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS)/UNMIS and other United Nations operations. Given the interdependence of the situation in the two countries, the presence should cover both Chad and the Central African

Republic. The new United Nations presence would have its headquarters in N'Djamena. Major operational activities would be focused on eastern Chad and the north-eastern Central African Republic, with a liaison office in Bangui.

61. It is envisaged that the presence would be multidimensional and headed by a Special Representative. The mission's civilian components would be relatively modest in size, and would complement and coordinate closely with existing partners and activities in Chad and the Central African Republic, including the country teams and BONUCA.

D. Concept of operations of a United Nations multidimensional presence

62. The technical assessment mission considered two principal options for a multidimensional presence:

(a) Option A — Monitoring mission: the mandate of a monitoring mission would be to observe the situation in the border areas. It would liaise with the parties, provide early warning and contribute to improving the security situation though confidence-building and preventive measures;

(b) Option B — Monitoring and protection mission: in addition to the above, a larger monitoring and protection mission would contribute to improving security in the border region by also providing protection, within its capabilities, to civilians under imminent threat.

E. Political and civil affairs

63. Under both options, the mission would need to include a political and a civil affairs component. The political component would provide support and advice to the Special Representative, assist him/her in facilitating political dialogue within and between the Central African Republic, Chad and the Sudan, including the implementation of the Tripoli and N'Djamena Agreements, and in establishing liaison with United Nations partners, including AU and other relevant subregional entities. The component would also be responsible for reporting to Headquarters. The civil affairs component would liaise with the local authorities and civil society in the areas of deployment and help to promote peace and national reconciliation. Both the political and civil affairs components would have staff in N'Djamena and in the field locations in eastern Chad and the north-eastern Central African Republic, as well as in the liaison office in Bangui.

F. Military

Military concept for option A — monitoring mission

64. The tasks of the military force would be to monitor and report on the cross-border activities of armed groups along the border with Darfur, focusing on major crossing points, in order to provide early warning against infiltration or incursion; maintain liaison with United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, AMIS/UNMIS, BONUCA, French troops, FOMUC and the authorities in Chad and

the Central African Republic; and protect United Nations personnel and property. The main points of application for the monitoring mission would be nine major border crossings in Chad and one in the Central African Republic, as well as key towns in the border region. Ideally, efficiency would be improved by similar efforts by AMIS on the Sudanese side of the border.

65. Such a United Nations operation would have a brigade-sized configuration with a military headquarters deployed in Abéché, three battalion sectors in Chad and a fourth battalion deployed in a separate sector in the Central African Republic.

66. In addition to the ground operation and extensive patrolling in the border areas, the mission would monitor the border by aerial observation. Long-range patrols would also be conducted. The use of unarmed military observers was considered but discarded, as it was determined that they could not be safely deployed in the border region without armed protection.

67. Quick reaction units would be established at both the mission and sector levels and supported by air mobility and special vehicles. The mission would need to be supported by engineer companies to assist in the construction of United Nations bases and provide extra operational capability. The force would also require at least six military helicopters to provide troop lift, as well as dedicated medical evacuation. A level 2 hospital would be required in Abéché, with an enhanced level 1 facility in Birao. Military police and logistics transport might also be required, subject to further assessment.

Military concept for option B — monitoring and protection mission

68. In addition to performing the liaison and monitoring tasks described above, the larger force would deter attacks and provide protection, within its capabilities, to civilians under imminent threat in its deployment areas.

69. The option would have a military division-sized composition with divisional headquarters to be located in Abéché. The force would comprise three brigade sectors in Chad and a battalion sector in the Central African Republic. In the sectors, the military component would monitor the cross-border activities of armed groups and conduct patrols to provide area security coverage around towns, villages and internally displaced persons locations. The force would seek to deter attacks by armed groups and react pre-emptively to protect the civilian population, including refugees and internally displaced persons. The force also would require rapid reaction capabilities at the force, sector and battalion levels, which could be deployed by air or in special vehicles. The force would also require additional enablers, such as engineer companies and additional helicopters. In the Central African Republic, the deployment of a strong battalion would still be limited to the north-eastern border region.

G. Police

70. The police concept of operations would be the same under both options. In Chad, the United Nations police would assist the national law enforcement agencies with the following four basic tasks: policing refugee camps (12 locations); policing key towns (including humanitarian bases); patrolling commuting routes between humanitarian field offices and internally displaced and refugee populations; and

policing areas where such populations are found. Such tasks could be performed only in combination with a United Nations military presence that could provide the necessary security. The above-mentioned tasks would be achieved by enhancing local police/gendarmerie capacity, building on the approach developed by UNHCR in the refugee camps. Preliminary estimates are that some 580 Chadian gendarmes and police would be required. Each would receive a subsistence allowance and additional basic logistic support. The mission would require some 160 United Nations police officers, including a training team for selection and predeployment training of local personnel, and a number of police advisers to support and monitor law enforcement activities on the ground. The use of formed police units could be considered, subject to further assessments and developments on the ground.

71. In the Central African Republic, pending further assessment of the situation in the north-east, the United Nations police presence would be limited to a small number of United Nations police officers to monitor and advise the national police and gendarmerie, and liaise with partners, including AMIS/UNMIS, BONUCA, FOMUC and the French forces. The deployment would include border-policing experts and general law enforcement personnel.

H. Humanitarian

72. The humanitarian operations in Chad and the Central African Republic would continue to be coordinated by the respective humanitarian coordinators, while the new mission in the border areas would include humanitarian liaison officers, to ensure appropriate liaison between the presence and the humanitarian community. The number and duty stations of the potential humanitarian liaison presence would depend on the option chosen.

I. Human rights

73. Under both options, a few human rights officers would be deployed as a part of the mission in key locations to monitor, document and report on the situation in the mandated areas and to conduct preliminary investigations in cases of major human rights violations. Particular attention would be paid to the identification of perpetrators and, thematically, to the issues of sexual violence and child protection. At the same time, the mission could work closely with local human rights organizations and train the local authorities and civil society in international human rights standards, including the guiding principles for the protection of internally displaced persons.

J. Public information

74. The mission should include a public information component, which would explain and promote the mandate and activities of the United Nations in both countries. It should aim to reach refugees, internally displaced persons, combatants and the population at large. The mission should (a) develop and implement a community outreach and advocacy programme, which should include workshops, training sessions and other more traditional public information activities, and (b) focus on radio broadcasting as the most effective tool of direct communication

with the population. Radio programmes could include the promotion of human rights, reconciliation, protection and the mandate and activities of the United Nations. To achieve the desired radio broadcasting goals, the United Nations should first seek to identify suitable partners that are already on the ground and that have the available networks and capacities.

75. Public information facilities should be established in N'Djamena and Abéché in Chad, and in Bangui and Birao in the Central African Republic.

K. Mission support

76. Due to the landlocked nature of both Chad and the Central African Republic, the deployment and subsequent sustainment of any United Nations presence in the countries would pose enormous challenges. The area of operations is characterized by difficult terrain and extreme weather conditions. The region is seriously affected by heavy rains during the period from May to November. Flooding of the area, together with the forested terrain, results in a swamp covering south-eastern Chad and the northern and north-eastern Central African Republic, which makes movement on the ground extremely difficult and hazardous. The United Nations presence would therefore have to rely heavily on air transport. There is a very high incidence of tropical diseases, including malaria, a health risk that would require the deployment of advanced medical facilities. According to estimates by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, the national HIV prevalence in Chad is 3.3 per cent, rising to 6 per cent in its largest cities and 8 per cent in the capital, N'Djamena. The Central African Republic is one of the worst-affected countries in the region, with an HIV prevalence of 11 per cent. Mission HIV awareness and prevention programmes will need to be implemented to reduce the risk of peacekeepers contracting and/or spreading HIV. At the same time, HIV concerns will need to be integrated into mission functions, such as human rights and the training of national police.

77. Chad and the Central African Republic are also characterized by very poor infrastructure, including roads, bridges, airfields, power, transportation, communications and health facilities. Commercial activity in both countries is limited to the capital cities, with the exception of mining and oil exploration. There is heavy dependence on imported goods and services. Therefore, any United Nations presence in both countries would require out-of-area sourcing of goods and services. It may be possible to recruit some skilled staff in Bangui. However, there are very limited possibilities in Chad, owing to demand for skilled labour in the oil sector and other factors.

78. Most importation into Chad and the Central African Republic is channelled through two main corridors: from Douala, in Cameroon, and, to a limited extent, from Benghazi, in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. Average transit time for a consignment from Douala to Bangui or N'Djamena is about six to eight weeks, depending on the season. From Bangui or N'Djamena to the local areas, the main supply routes are even more complex and transportation is monopolized by a network of formal and informal entities. Therefore, to deploy and sustain a United Nations presence in the region, the Organization would have to create its own infrastructure in terms of transportation, communications, medical care, supply and

engineering. Most goods and services would have to be imported from outside the region.

79. Due to the above-mentioned constraints, a United Nations deployment in the region would be time-consuming and costly. Since the rainy season begins in May, a decision to deploy would have to be taken no later than January 2007. Notwithstanding such a decision, it would be essential to dispatch a small advance team as soon as possible to lay the groundwork for the possible deployment of a mission.

L. Safety and security

80. The multidimensional presence would have an appropriate civilian security component in order to facilitate a safe and secure environment for mandate implementation and programme delivery. That would be essential given the insecurity that prevails in the possible areas of deployment.

VI. Observations and recommendations

81. Over the last weeks and months, the situation in the border areas has deteriorated considerably and is now a serious threat to peace and security in the whole region. The devastating conflict in Darfur has clearly spilled over into Chad, and the conflicts in Darfur, Chad and the Central African Republic appear to be increasingly interlinked.

82. The humanitarian and human rights situation has also worsened and is having a serious impact on the civilian populations in eastern Chad and the north-eastern Central African Republic. The human tragedy that we are already witnessing in Darfur and the border areas is likely to worsen, if the current hostilities are allowed to continue. I strongly appeal to the Governments concerned, and the various rebel groups, to refrain from attacking civilians and to respect the humanitarian and civilian character of the refugee and internally displaced person locations, as well as the safety of humanitarian workers and their assets. In that regard, and pursuant to paragraph 13 of Security Council resolution 1706 (2006), the necessary security conditions must be created to allow for the relocation, in safety and dignity, of the inhabitants of those refugee camps in Chad which are currently too close to the border area. I urge Member States to make the necessary funds available for both the ongoing humanitarian operations and for the relocation of the refugee camps.

83. The deployment of the multidimensional presence envisaged by the Security Council in paragraph 9 (d) of its resolution 1706 (2006) was discussed with the Presidents of Chad and of the Central African Republic. President Bozizé called for the deployment of United Nations troops as soon as possible. President Déby indicated that Chad accepted, in principle, the deployment of a United Nations mission, but pointed out that the nature, strength and composition of such an operation would need to be further discussed.

84. There is evidently a need to address the rapidly deteriorating security situation and to protect civilians in the border areas. However, the situation in eastern Chad and the north-eastern Central African Republic is extremely fluid, with ongoing hostilities between the respective Governments and rebel groups, especially in

Chad. There are, at present, only limited prospects for a meaningful dialogue and reconciliation process between the Governments and the rebels in the two countries. Similarly, there are so far no signs of a credible and inclusive political process in Darfur. Accordingly, the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping force in eastern Chad and the north-eastern Central African Republic would face considerable risks, and its safe entry would depend on the consent of the parties. Otherwise, any United Nations presence could become the target of attacks by rebel groups, if they were to perceive it as interfering with their cross-border activities. Unless all the parties concerned were to agree to a ceasefire and engage in an intra- and inter-State dialogue aimed at a political solution, a United Nations force would be operating in the midst of continuing hostilities and would have no clear exit strategy. The conditions for an effective United Nations peacekeeping operation do not, therefore, seem to be in place as at the time of writing of the present report.

85. However, should the Security Council decide to pursue the idea of establishing a United Nations multidimensional presence in eastern Chad and the north-eastern Central African Republic, pursuant to paragraph 9 (d) of resolution 1706 (2006), it should consider authorizing the deployment of a robust monitoring and protection mission, as described in section V above (option B). A smaller mission, as envisaged under option A, would not be able to protect civilians under imminent threat and, at the same time, to stabilize the border area. Moreover, its deployment would be fraught with unacceptable risk and raise expectations that would likely be disappointed.

86. The decision to deploy such a robust United Nations monitoring and protection mission should be contingent upon a cessation of hostilities and an agreement by all parties to allow the induction of the force, facilitate its operations and fully comply with its mandate. I would also recommend that it be contingent upon the Governments concerned engaging each other and their respective opposition groups, including armed rebel movements, in a process of dialogue and reconciliation aimed at reaching a political solution. The Security Council and all Member States that could bring their influence to bear on the parties should redouble their efforts to promote such a political process. To that end, I will continue to consult with AU and other partners on the necessary facilitation efforts to foster national reconciliation in Chad. Regarding the Central African Republic, the Department of Political Affairs has dispatched a mission to the subregion to consult national and regional stakeholders within the States of the Monetary and Economic Community of Central Africa to explore peaceful ways and means of resolving the current political crisis in that country.

87. In addition, before making a final decision on the deployment in Chad and the Central African Republic, the Security Council should ascertain that Member States are prepared to make available the necessary troops and police, and to assist in addressing the daunting logistical challenges which such an operation would face at a time when the Organization's capacities in the area are already stretched.

88. In the meantime, the Security Council may wish to consider authorizing the dispatch of an advance team to Chad and the Central African Republic. Such an advance team would collect more information on the situation in the border areas and further explore the possibilities for a political agreement between the Governments concerned in the region, and between the Governments and their respective opposition groups. It would also conduct further detailed planning and

logistic preparations, so as to enable me to submit more comprehensive recommendations to the Security Council in due course.

89. In conclusion, I wish to stress that the responsibility for addressing the situation in Darfur, eastern Chad and the north-eastern Central African Republic must rest, first and foremost, with the leaders of those countries. They must muster the necessary political will and leadership to bring about an effective cessation of hostilities and thereby put an end to the untold suffering inflicted on the civilian populations concerned. I call upon them to honour the various agreements they have freely entered into, in particular the Tripoli and N'Djamena Agreements. I also encourage the respective Governments and rebel groups to enter into a genuine dialogue and reconciliation process. Only such a process can ensure the restoration of durable peace and stability in the region.